

A RED RIBBON WEEK

the memo from the elementary school comes home with a red ribbon stapled to it. next week is red ribbon week, which is the week when the children get their consciousness raised about the war on drugs. as part of the collective effort, it is suggested that each child wear a red ribbon and that it would be an even more encouraging step if red ribbons were attached to every family's threshold.

i almost bring up my italian dinner on the school's red ribbons.

of course, it's just a loyalty oath for kids. my third-grader and kindergartner are supposed to bear public testimony that they are not addicted to substances that they have barely heard of and to, in the manner of the old irish catholics, "take the pledge" that they never will be..

it's put out more flags.

it's naming names to the house unamerican activities committee, like the kids who have started turning in their parents for smoking pot.

it's what we have instead of god.

it's what we have instead of the inquisition.

and you still hear advocates of prayer in the public schools insisting there would be no undue stress on the children whose parents did not want them to participate.

just as, if i tell my kids they can't wear the red ribbons, i am not only subjecting them to the cruel modes of youthful ostracizing, but i am indicting myself as the drug user that i may look like, but which, in fact, i am not.

so how does one deal with such a dilemma?
i'll tell you how a real man does:
i have another drink and leave the whole thing up to my wife.

— Gerald Locklin
Long Beach CA